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letter w/ deletions

HARRIS LAWRENCE T
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EXCISE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY L. May DATE 5/11
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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S E C R E T MONTEVIDEO 5866
E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: SHUM, UY
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: ARREST BY OCU OF PIANIST MIGUEL ESTRELLA AND OTHER ALLEGED MONTENEROS IN URUGUAY

REF: STATE 300338

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. AS CONFIRMED BY OFFICIAL GOU PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS, MIGUEL ANGEL ESTRELLA AVILA BORGES WAS AMONG THOSE CAPTURED IN THE DECEMBER 15-16 BLITZKRIEG AGAINST SUSPECTED ARGENTINE MONTONEROS HIDING OUT IN URUGUAY. IN THE COURSE OF THE RAIDS, WHICH WERE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT MONTEVIDEO, FOUR PERSONS WERE CAPTURED (INCLUDING ESTRELLA); TWO COMMITTED SUICIDE AT THE MOMENT OF ARREST BY INGESTING CYANIDE; AND ONE WAS KILLED IN A GUNFIGHT. ALL FOUR OF THE SURVIVORS WERE LATER INDICTED UNDER THE MILITARY PENAL CODE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN A SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION, A CHARGE WHICH CARRIES A SENTENCE OF FROM THREE TO EIGHTEEN YEARS. CURRENTLY, THEY ARE AWAITING EXTRADITION BACK TO ARGENTINA. A SMALL CACHE OF WEAPONS WAS REPORTEDLY FOUND, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT KNOWN IF THESE WERE CONNECTED

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TO ESTRELLA'S PARTICULAR CASE.

2. THE STORY OF THE CAPTURE, AS EMBODIED IN OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASES CARRIED VERBATIM IN ALL LOCAL DAILIES AFTER THE ARRESTS AND AFTER THE INDICTMENTS, HERALDED THE RAIDS TRIUMPHANTLY. THE PRESS STATEMENTS STRESSED THE MONTONEROS' SPECIAL SKILL IN BOMB-MAKING, THEIR FANATICISM; THEIR COMPARTMENTALIZED (AND HENCE SECURE) INFRASTRUCTURE AND THEIR HEAVY FINANCING FROM INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST SOURCES. IT ATTRIBUTED THEIR OVERTHROW TO THE "COOPERATION OF THE URUGUAYAN PEOPLE, WHO DO NOT WANT TO RETURN TO THE UNHAPPY PAST..." AND TO THE "UNCEASING VIGILANCE OF THE SECURITY FORCES..."

3. ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT, ESTRELLA IS A NATIVE ARGENTINIAN, BORN IN TUCUMAN PROVINCE ON JULY 9, 1936. HE IS A WIDOWER. (END UNCLASSIFIED